

24 SEP 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director

THROUGH: Deputy Director (Plans)

SUBJECT: Visits of Foreign Officials to Headquarters

1. The Deputy Director asked what we can do about our problems with visits of foreign officials after he had read our paper on the subject. He may be interested in knowing what has been and is being done to improve the situation.

2. When the paper on the handling of visits was still in rough draft, certain trends and methods, some good and some bad, had already become clear. The FI Staff began at that time to look more closely into the purpose and content of visits proposed for approval and to recommend changes whenever symptoms of poor planning were apparent; the sponsoring divisions were always ready to make changes when there was sufficient time to do so. We also incorporated the lessons learned from our draft study into [redacted]

[redacted] More recently, after the printed paper was distributed to the operating divisions, we have noted that some area desks now require more advance notice of planned visits from their stations and insist on having more specific information on their purpose and on the suggested agenda. The Chief of one Latin American branch, who had devised with the station a plan to give Headquarters training and substantial subsidies to the local service, changed his views after reading the FI publication and explained to the station that the account it gave of our experience had convinced him that the original plan was wrong. It is too early to know the general field reaction to our publication, but we did receive a dispatch from [redacted] in which he states that the paper on visits and the others in the series are of inestimable value to station officers.

3. We realize, of course, that persuasion is not enough to extirpate bad habits that are inveterate and widespread. We have therefore translated

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into directives the most important lessons learned from our study of visits. While the writing of the paper was in progress, we revised Clandestine Services [] which governs the preparation, approval and handling of visits; the revised version, which is ready for the approval of the Deputy Director (Plans), stresses the importance of having each visit aimed at fulfilling clear and specific operational objectives, and of giving sufficient advance notice for the Headquarters participants to make the necessary preparations. We have also followed up the distribution of the publication to field stations with a book dispatch, written in the name of the Deputy Director (Plans), which directs every CIA officer who participates in the planning and preparation of a visit to become familiar with the contents of the FI study. The dispatch reflects the often-expressed concern of the Deputy Director (Plans) about the large number of visits and the ineffectiveness of many of them; in fact, the prime mover in our undertaking the study was this known concern of the Deputy Director (Plans).

4. We have other studies under way which analyse our experience in other problem areas of our operations, particularly in agent handling and the conduct of liaison. We will recommend that these studies be complemented by the issue of directives by the Deputy Director (Plans) whenever such action appears necessary. The directives will prescribe courses of action, whereas our studies and our day-to-day staff guidance will explain the reasons for those courses of action and propose ways of carrying them out. We are confident that we can by such means restore order into operational areas that have become troublesome and maintain that order by being watchful for signs of relapse into carelessness and improvisation.

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Chief
Foreign Intelligence

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cc: Deputy Director (Plans)

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